

DIRECTIVE No. 17/2000/CT-TTg OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2000 ON COPING WITH FLOODING IN MEKONG RIVER DELTA

In 2000, floods came nearly a month earlier than annually and rose quickly, and high water level caused deep immersion for many days in the upstream provinces of Long An, Dong Thap, An Giang and Kien Giang, thus causing great damages to the Summer-Autumn rice crop, roads, schools and houses, affecting production and the life of the population in the region.

According to forecast by the Hydro-Meteorology General Department, the flood in the Mekong River delta continues to rise quickly and in five to ten days to come may reach the peak equivalent to the peak in 1961. The deeply immersed area may be larger than in the floods of 1978 and 1996. High flood peak and deep immersion many drag for many days. In view of this situation, the Prime Minister instruct the ministries, branches and People's Committees of the provinces in the Mekong River delta to carry out the following urgent tasks:

I. THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEES OF THE PROVINCES IN THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA:

1. To urgently supplement measures to cope with big and prolonged floods over large areas, adopt very concrete plans of rescue and assistance. The number one question is to ensure safety for the people's lives, considering this to be the foremost political task of the Party organizations and administrations at all levels in the flooded region in the Mekong River Delta.

2. To concentrate forces and means to evacuate immediately the population of the deeply immersed and dangerously washed areas to safe places; to urge the population to remove, and when necessary, to force them to remove in order to ensure safety of life for the population, first of all for old people and children; at the same time to adopt measures to ensure stability of life for the population in the evacuation areas and to protect the properties of those who are evacuated.

3. To organize and deploy immediately the assistance to the poor people in the immersed areas who are meeting with acute difficulties, including the people coming from other areas to earn their living. Resolutely not to let famine, still less death of starvation, occur. To ensure enough medicine, preventive drugs, to limit epidemics, especially after the flood recedes. To carry out timely assistance to the needy, in an open and equitable manner, not to let losses and negativism happen.

4. The provinces must organize emergency rescue force right in the districts, communes, hamlets and

crucial areas, with clear assignment of command and guidance duties, assure timely handling of the worst situation that may happen, ensure enough shock forces and means of rescue.

5. The military units of the 7th and 9th Military Zones and units of the border armies shall closely coordinate to help the localities in the rescue operations, in the evacuation and organization of timely assistance to the population.

6. The health service must take very concrete measures to care for the health of the population, have a firm grasp of the number of sick and pregnant women nearing their time in each locality in order to provide timely assistance, adopt plans to deal with the problem of hygiene to prevent the outbreak of epidemics (diseases of the digestive system, eye and skin diseases...); treat the source of water and conduct environmental sanitation, adopt plans to put down epidemics right after they are detected.

7. In the deeply immersed areas where going to school is not safe for the pupils, class must be discontinued so that pupils may stay home, but there must be plans for appropriate compensatory schooling to ensure the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning.

8. The local administration at all levels shall have to cooperate with the Fatherland Front and other mass organizations to continue the campaign for mutual aid among the population in the spirit of mutual love and mutual support to overcome difficulties and disasters.

9. The provinces must take the initiative in building embankments to protect the fruit tree areas, and adopt plans to protect storages, materials and commodities, and houses and properties of the people, strive to reduce to the minimum the damage caused by the flood. The provinces in the lower basin of the river must take the initiative in prevention, adopt plans to cope with high level floods which are converging and may last for several days.

10. As well as coping with flood, the provinces must prepare immediately the plans for the Winter-Spring crops, restoring the damaged infrastructures and essential welfare projects in order to serve production, rebuilding the damaged houses, schools and medical stations in order to quickly stabilize production and life of the population after the flood recedes.

11. The People's Committees of the provinces must coordinate with the related ministries and branches to revise and supplement the plans of socio-economic development in the whole province and each specific locality, especially concrete plans for the population clusters and lines in order to make appropriate

investments, so that after a number of years the population in the flood-prone areas could cohabit with flood, stabilize their life and achieve sustainable development.

II. THE MINISTRIES AND CENTRALLY-RUN BRANCHES AND THE LOCALITIES MUST HANDLE THE FOLLOWING JOBS AFTER THE FLOOD RECEDES:

1. The Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Ministry of Finance shall adopt plans to allocate funds to restore the damaged infrastructure projects.

2. The Ministry of Communications and Transport shall direct the units to complete the procedures, balance the fund of the branch in order to restore and upgrade Highways 62, 30 and 91; coordinate with the localities to restore and repair the rural roads.

3. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development shall continue to complete the project of flood drainage into the West Sea, the project of fresh water retention and salt water prevention; study to broaden the Hong Ngu canal and canal 79; direct the provincial Agricultural Services to prepare enough seeds, fertilizer and water conservancy measures in order to start the Winter-Spring crop in time right after the water recedes.

To assume the prime responsibilities and cooperate with the Ministry of Communications and Transport, the Ministry of Construction, and the Ministry of Aquatic Products to inspect and appraise the effect of the infrastructure works already built according to Decision No. 99/TTg of the Prime Minister to draw experiences and amend or supplement them appropriately in order to develop their effect and limit to the lowest level the damage caused by the flood.

4. The Ministry of Construction shall help the provinces to review the plans for the population clusters and lines, especially the towns and townships, evaluate and draw experiences from the projects of building houses on stilts, or heightening the house foundations in order to work out plans for completing them and making them more effective and suitable for the conditions in the flood-prone areas. Together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Communications and Transport shall direct the localities to revise the planning of the population areas, the towns, townships and centers of commune clusters in the areas prone to deep immersion in order to adopt plans, depending on the terrain and geology of each area, for appropriate solutions, such as building dyke embankments, heightening the house foundations, establishing flood-aversion population areas according to rows or clusters

of houses, associating the digging of water conservancy canals with the building of population areas.

5. The Ministry of Finance shall guide the exemption or reduction of taxes for the households damaged by floods, and adopt plans of using part of the budget revenue excess in 2000 to assist in overcoming the consequences of floods.

6. The State Bank shall guide the debt freezing and continue to grant loans to the households damaged by floods in order to help them have enough capital for timely production of the Winter-Spring crops.

7. The Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment shall adopt plans to help the localities in the repair of schools and medical stations, to ensure the schooling plans of the students, prevent and fight against epidemics, and assure environmental hygiene.

8. The Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs shall guide the assistance to the hungry households, households victimized by disasters, households which are evacuated...

9. The Central Steering Committee for Flood and Storm Control, the Hydro-Meteorology General Department must have a firm grasp of the evolution of the floods, give timely forecasts and warnings and adopt plans of guidance for timely handling.

The ministers, the heads of ministerial-level agencies and agencies attached to the Government, the presidents of the People's Committees of the provinces in the Mekong River Delta shall have to seriously implement this Directive.

For the Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
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